



# GADCS Overview

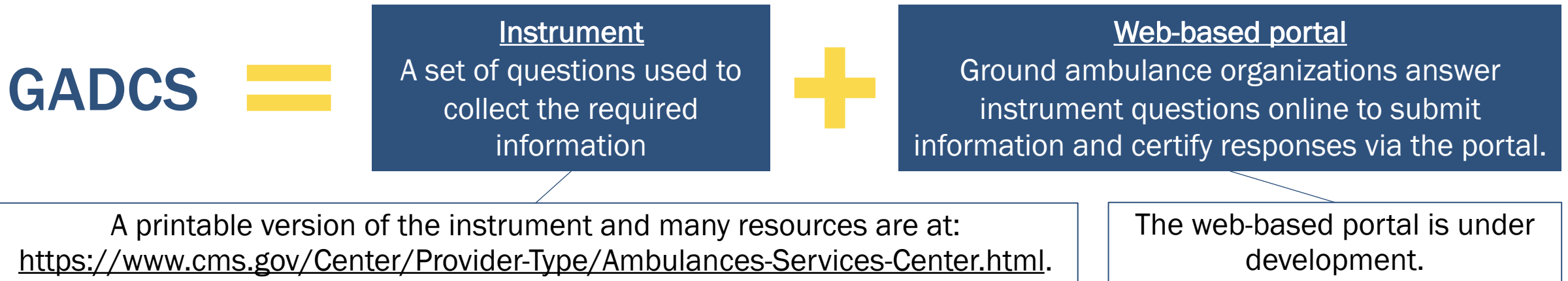
Maria Durham (CMS)

# Why is CMS collecting data from ambulance organizations?

- Section 1834(l)(17) of the Social Security Act requires CMS to collect cost, revenue, utilization, and other information from representative samples of ground ambulance providers and suppliers (“organizations”).

## What is the GADCS?

- CMS developed the Medicare Ground Ambulance Data Collection System (GADCS) to meet the requirements in Section 1834(l)(17) of the Act.
- The GADCS consists of two interconnected components:



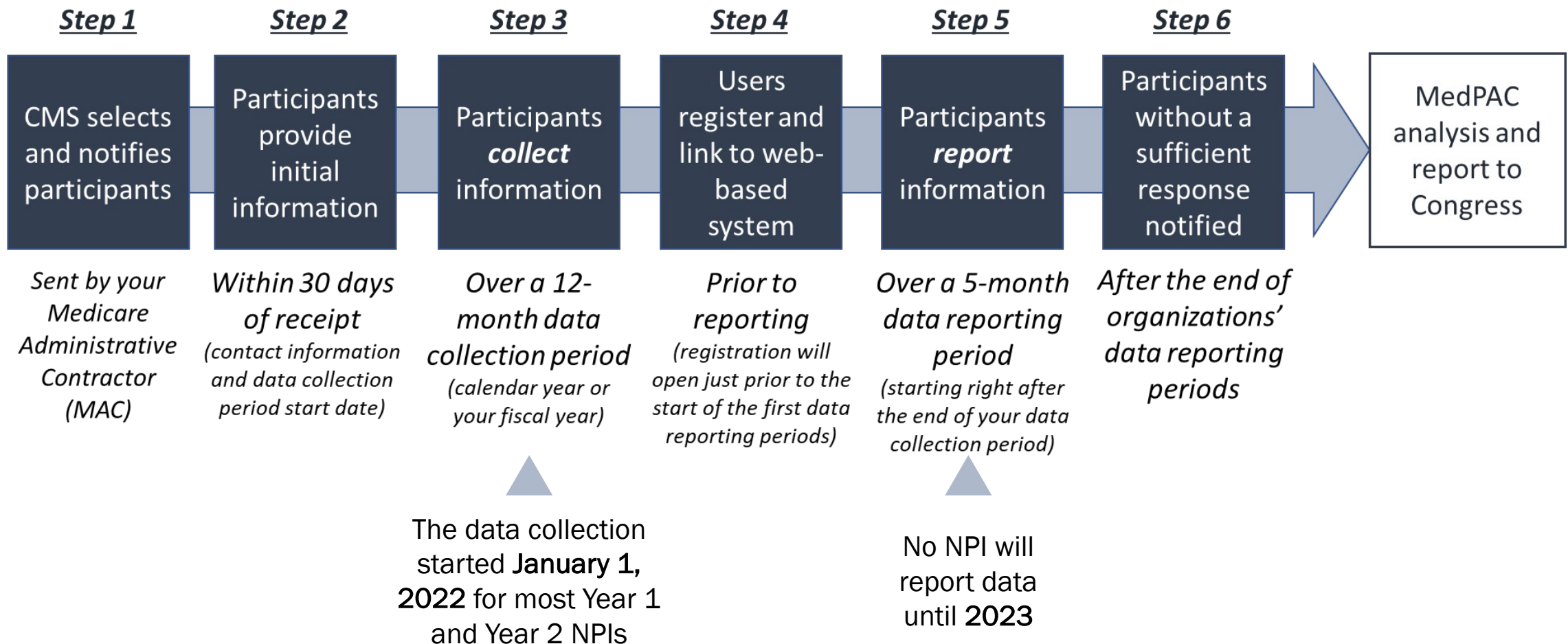
# Which organizations need to collect and report data?

- CMS samples a quarter of ambulance organizations annually, four years in a row.
  - Sampling is based on National Provider Identifier (NPI).
  - Eligible NPIs billed Medicare for a ground ambulance service in a recent year.
  - Nearly all ground ambulance NPIs will be selected over the four-year period.
  - Organizations will only be selected once during the four-year period at this time.
- CMS already selected and posted list of the first two (“Year 1” and “Year 2”) of four samples.
  - Lists of selected NPIs are on the Ambulances Services Center website:  
<https://www.cms.gov/Center/Provider-Type/Ambulances-Services-Center.html>
  - CMS, through its contractors, is in the process of sending out notification letters for Year 1 and Year 2 NPIs.
- CMS will select and post the third and fourth samples (“Year 3” and “Year 4”) at a later time.

# My NPI was selected. Do we have to participate?

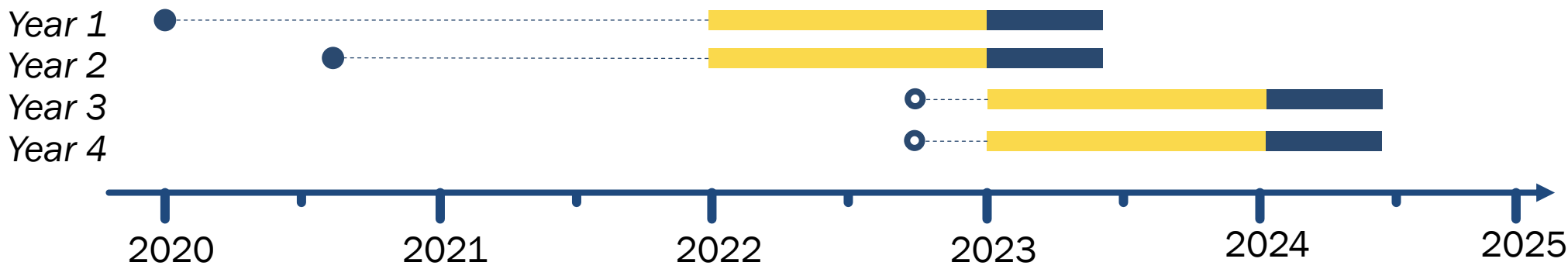
- **In short, yes:**
  - Sampled organizations are required by law to sufficiently collect and report data.
  - Organizations that do not sufficiently report data will receive a 10% payment reduction for Medicare Ambulance Fee Schedule services provided during the next calendar year.
- **Your participation is important:**
  - Congress required the Medicare Payment Advisory Committee (MedPAC) to assess the adequacy of Medicare ambulance payment rates using GADCS data.
  - We believe MedPAC will be best positioned to assess on the adequacy of payment for ground ambulance services if they have complete and accurate data from all types of ground ambulance organizations.

# What's the process for GADCS?

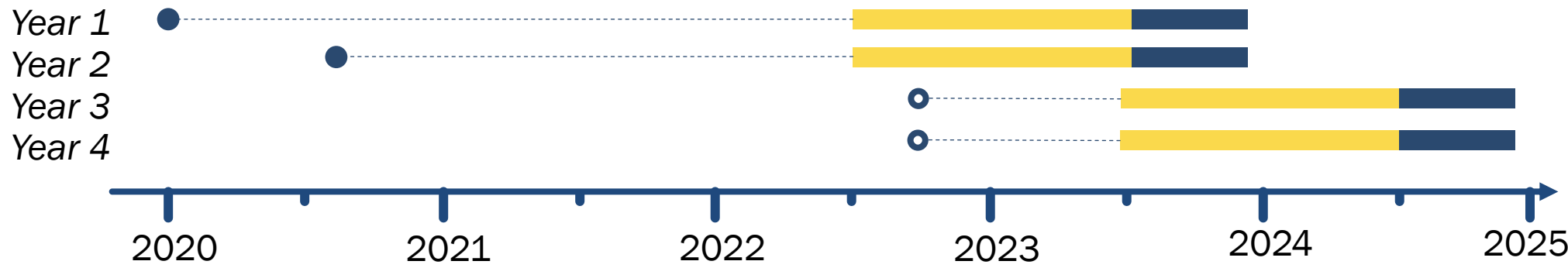


# When exactly do we have to collect and report information?

Jan. 1 data collection period start date



July 1 data collection period start date



● Sample selected (list already posted)

○ Sample selected (planned)

■ Organizations collecting data

■ Organizations reporting data

# What information will I need to collect and report?

## Organizational Characteristics

Section 2: Organizational Characteristics  
Section 3: Service Area  
Section 4: Emergency Response Time

## Services Provided

Section 5: Ground Ambulance Service Volume  
Section 6: Service Mix

## Information on Costs

Section 7: Labor Costs  
Section 8: Facilities Costs  
Section 9: Vehicle Costs  
Section 10: Equipment, Consumable, and Supply Costs  
Section 11: Other Costs  
Section 12: Total Costs

## Information on Revenue

Section 13: Revenues

CMS developed several resources to help organizations collect data, including:

- A “Quick Reference Guide”
- Overview and detailed webinars
- A full, printable version of the questions you’ll have to answer (the “instrument”)

All these resources are available on the Ambulances Services Center website:

<https://www.cms.gov/Center/Provider-Type/Ambulances-Services-Center.html>

# What do I need to know while collecting data?

- In general, you should collect information on expenses, revenue, and services for your **entire** ground ambulance organization, not just services delivered to Medicare beneficiaries.
- The expenses, revenue, and services that you report should cover the **entire 12-month data collection period**.
- Unless specified in the instructions, **do not report estimates** or “best guesses.”
- Much of the required information will be already tracked by your organization. **You may need to start collecting some new information.**
- If you provide other types of services ((e.g., you are a fire-based organization or a hospital), you will likely need to **allocate** many of your costs and revenues to those specific to ground ambulance services.
- You may need to **collect cost information from outside your ground ambulance organization** in some cases (e.g., if your municipality pays for facilities, utilities, or benefits).





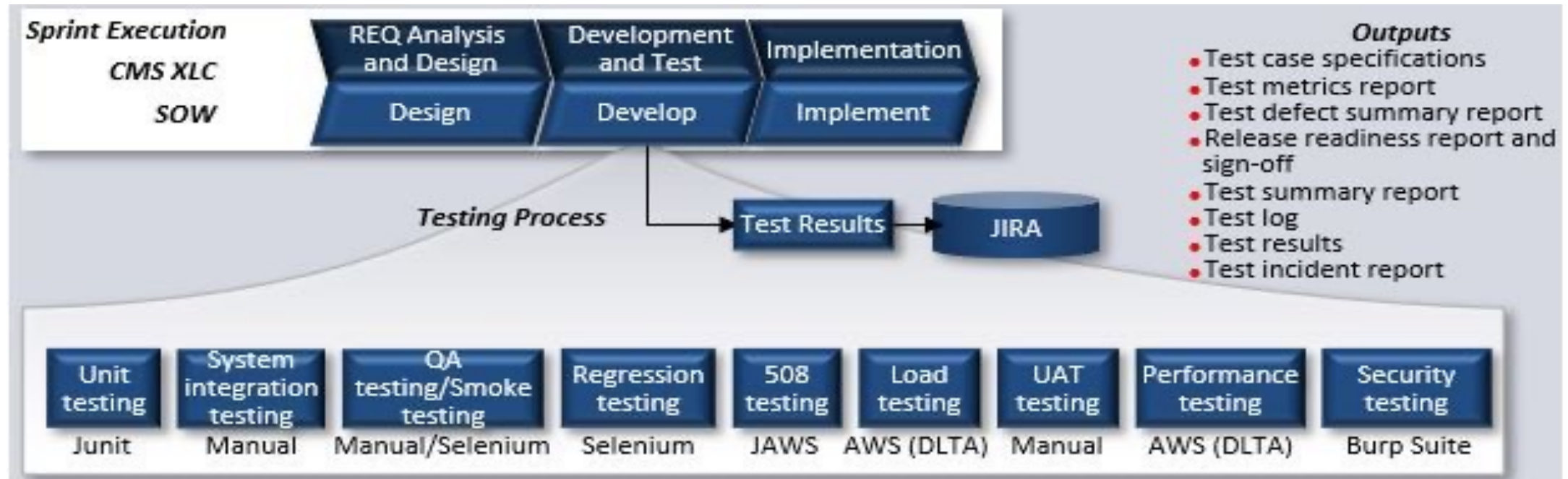
# GADCS Testing Update

Maria Durham (CMS)

# GADCS Characteristics

- GADCS is a new web-based, interactive ambulance data collection system with a modernized, rules-based engine.
- GADCS provides an easy-to-use user interface for data submission by organizations.
- GADCS provides standard and ad hoc analysis/reporting capability.
- GADCS provides limited file upload functionality.

# Testing Approach



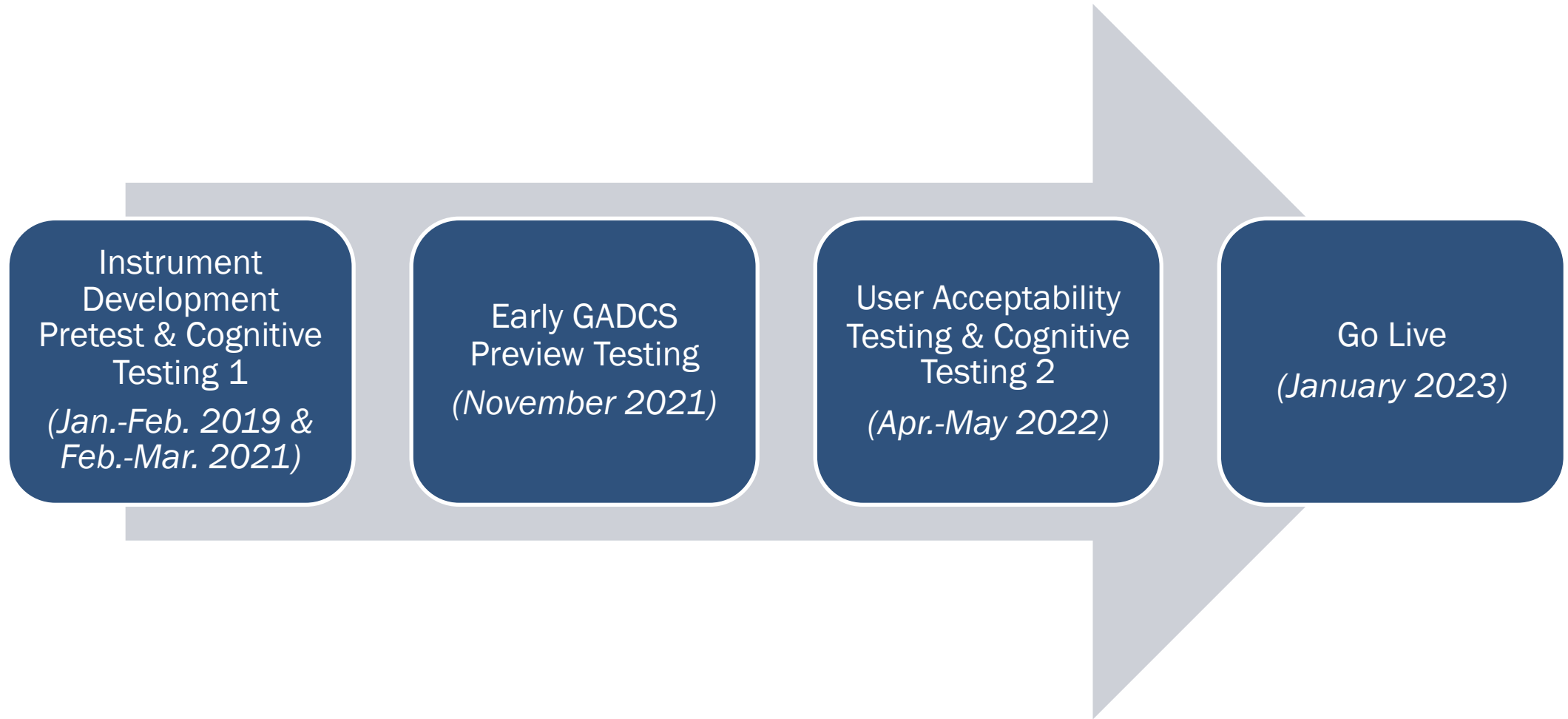
## Cognitive Testing:

- 1) Completed one round of cognitive testing on the Instrument Questions.
- 2) Another round planned during UAT.



Early preview (Fall 21) and formal UAT (Spring 22)  
Validation Testing

# User Test Timeline



# GADCS Early Preview User Testing

“I think overall the portal was very user friendly. I have just a couple of suggestions. If you have to go back or exit out in the middle of a section, it would be nice for you to not have to start back at the beginning of the section—You should be able to start back where you left off. Also I think having more of the dotted line definitions or further instructions would be very handy. When I was testing the portal I printed out the pdf version and referred back to that many times, because it had more detailed information about some of the questions.”

“Overall the process was REALLY smooth. The individual modules were linked thoroughly. I don’t have any questions on the online reporting process.”

We participated in the GADSCS testing period with some sample data. In general I found the system easy to use and some of the nice features I noticed included:  
Easily accessible definitions/standards on the same page as a question. It’s convenient to have them at hand instead of having to refer back to the PDF  
Multiple ways of entering ZIPs (we have a wide service area) and I had a lot input. Being able to choose paste in saved lots of time  
There was a brief moment of confusion but selecting that my NPI was incorrect (it is correct, just testing) ..  
The most significant point for improvement was being able to skip around sections since this data is going to need some collaboration between offices here was handled during the Q&A session so no work needed there. Thanks and good job!

# GADCS Early Preview User Testing Next Steps

Now that this testing phase is over, we are reviewing the feedback and making requested modifications.

- We will address any defects identified during testing as well as roll out requested features. Examples include: navigation within sections, allowing users to enter zero for interest payments.
- We learned several lessons about participation and response rates and how to encourage more participation.

We will apply these lessons for our **User Acceptance Testing** planned for the spring of this year.

# Where can I get more information and help?

- There are many resources on the Ambulances Services Center website:  
<https://www.cms.gov/Center/Provider-Type/Ambulances-Services-Center>

Resource	Direct Link
GADCS Quick Reference Guide	<a href="https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/AmbulanceFeeSchedule/Downloads/Medicare-Ground-Ambulance-Quick-Reference.pdf">https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/AmbulanceFeeSchedule/Downloads/Medicare-Ground-Ambulance-Quick-Reference.pdf</a>
GADCS Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)	<a href="https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/AmbulanceFeeSchedule/Downloads/Medicare-Ground-Ambulance-FAQs.pdf">https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/AmbulanceFeeSchedule/Downloads/Medicare-Ground-Ambulance-FAQs.pdf</a>
A printable version of the Medicare Ground Ambulance Data Collection Instrument (in English and Spanish)	English: <a href="https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/AmbulanceFeeSchedule/Downloads/Medicare-Ground-Ambulance-Data-Collection-System-Instrument.pdf">https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/AmbulanceFeeSchedule/Downloads/Medicare-Ground-Ambulance-Data-Collection-System-Instrument.pdf</a> Spanish: <a href="https://www.cms.gov/files/document/medicare-ground-ambulance-data-collection-instrument-printable-spanish-version-posted-02102022.pdf">https://www.cms.gov/files/document/medicare-ground-ambulance-data-collection-instrument-printable-spanish-version-posted-02102022.pdf</a>
Prior educational webinars and Q&A sessions	Listed directly on the Ambulances Services Center website

- Contact [AmbulanceDataCollection@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:AmbulanceDataCollection@cms.hhs.gov) for ground ambulance data collection inquiries.
- Contact [AmbulanceODF@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:AmbulanceODF@cms.hhs.gov) for other ambulance services inquiries.